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World Affairs

London Is Chilly To the Russians

Except perhaps for Buckingham Palace itself, nothing in London better epitomizes capitalistic elegance than the medium-sized (300-room) hotel in Mayfair called Claridge's. Kings and queens, princes and maharajas have stayed there. In its salons and lounges, where the porters wear tail coats and knee breeches, there is a flavor of royalty as distinguishable as that in the principality of Monaco, though somewhat less pungent. Last week, over this aristocratic hostelry, a giant red hammer and sickle flag flew, and in the second-floor royal suite there were lodged the first Soviet government leaders to make a state visit to a major Western capital since the 1917 Bolshevik uprising.

The team of "B and K," as Londoners have labeled them—Premier Nikolai A. Bulganin and Communist party chief Nikita S. Khrushchev—were in London to discuss world affairs with British leaders and, as the Russians put it, to try to achieve "a lessening of international tension and a better understanding."

Messrs. Bulganin and Khrushchev had hoped to make at least part of their ten-day visit a tour of the United Kingdom along lines similar to that which had won them new friends in India, Burma and Afghanistan. But their reception—from the time they arrived at Portsmouth Wednesday aboard the cruiser Ordzhonikidze through their various appearances in London streets—was chilly.

Nevertheless, the world watched in search of any clew as to whether the new regime in Moscow was sincerely intent on establishing peace based on friendly relationships and co-operation among nations.

The visit took place against a background of other events that did point in the direction of peace. The principal ones were these:

Truce—But Shaky

Both Israel and Egypt accepted a United Nations-sponsored cease-fire agreement, thus averting, temporarily at least, a localized conflict with all the ingredients to brew a much larger war. It was a shaky peace, marred by new charges of border violations, but it was a step.

Twelve nations, including the United States and Russia, took the first step toward creating an International Atomic Energy Agency to promote the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, such as power and medical research.

And Russia, on the eve of the historic London meeting, announced the disbandment of the Cominform, the international alliance of workers' parties in support of communism.

Elsewhere, however, other happenings reflected the wariness shown in London's cool attitude:

In Washington the chief of the Central Intelligence Agency, Allen W. Dulles, sat for three hours giving a Senate committee a secret but obviously impressive report on how Russia's air power compares with ours and then was recalled for more testimony tomorrow.

In London the disarmament talks among representatives of the

United States, Britain, Canada, France and Soviet Russia still showed little progress after five weeks.

In Tehran the Baghdad pact nations—Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and Great Britain—conferred on co-ordinating their efforts against Communist infiltration in that strategic area and, going further, tried their best to get this country to become a member. The United States said no, but gave the bloc a big moral boost by accepting membership in some of the pact's important committees.